



How-To Hire an SEO Agency

By Matthew A. Perosi

Search Engine Optimization is the process of refining and tuning your website so Google and Bing will be able to fully read it. This “SEO” should be part of your initial website design planning and then a continual refining to keep up with future changes in the search engines. The SEO process is never ending and it’s best performed by someone proficient in the fast paced changes of the internet.

Instead of paying the never-ending SEO expense, you could pay for short term online ads through Facebook or AdWords. Consider that paid ads stop bringing new business as soon as you stop running them, but SEO is a long term investment that will continue to yield results even if you discontinue the process for 6 months.

SEO is a long term investment because there’s no way to accomplish it overnight. SEO is more than a plug-in that you add to your website, and it’s more than a list of specific services that someone says they will do for you. SEO takes out-of-the-box thinking with clarity of understanding your goals and business. Here’s a broad overview of how the SEO process should work:

-  1. Analyze who you want your target market to be.
-  2. Analyze if your website is attracting that target market.
-  3. Review the customer usability of your website.
-  4. Discover problems with the site that prevent people from converting from simple visitors into customers.
-  5. Establish a long term plan with stages to correct the problems you discover.
-  6. Review results of those steps and continue with the previous plan or improve it.

An SEO agency might take 2 to 3 weeks to complete each of those steps. The analysis process might take longer if you have a small number of visitors to your site. It’s harder to analyze websites with lower visitors because there’s less accurate data collected. Choosing the right agency could mean the difference between business success and failure. It might take months before you realize you hired the wrong agency, so consider your choices carefully.

Scout for potential agencies by googling “seo for jewelry websites” or “jewelry website seo.” The results should show many companies saying they are the best. Here’s how you can decide which one actually is...

First, only choose those listed organically. Don’t hire someone because you saw their paid ad in the right margin. Organic listing proves they know what they are doing.

Next, review all the organic listings on pages 1 and 2 of the search results. Page 1 will probably have image and video links which you also need to see because you will also need your own images and YouTube videos ranked. Watch the videos and look at the images. Try to find videos and images that are associated with one of the organically ranked agencies. Again, this shows that the agency knows how to rank well for text, images, and videos.

Read all the agency websites explaining their process, which should mimic the 6 broad steps I outlined above. The more experienced SEO firms refer to their process as a set of steps using buzzwords like analysis/discovery, research/planning, execution/implementation, and reporting.

Don’t hire an SEO agency that proposes any type of grid or menu of services for you to choose. This presentation tactic is out of date and it’s designed to confuse you and sound impressive. In reality you need to understand in simple terms what their process is and how it will be implemented and improved over time based on measured success or failure of their work.

Some SEO firms offer a process with a fast approach to get work completed then taper off over several months; others will provide a balanced approach over a longer time. You choose the approach depending on how quickly you want to see results. The faster approach will be more expensive but it will help your store sooner and those paid online ads will be more affective. The balanced approach might take 6 to 12 months to really see amazing results.

Take time to evaluate every potential SEO agency. Get to know them and how they will work with you. Don’t hire them unless you are fully satisfied because they are as important a choice as hiring your accountant.



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